

Detroit Recreation Department



Strategic Master Plan Executive Summary Volume I May 2006

Final Draft for Detroit City Council Review

INTRODUCTION: WHY CITY PARKS MATTER

Providing good parks and recreation facilities is an important part of a city's effort to remake itself as vibrant and attractive place to live, work and play.

In the 19th century, all major U.S. cities developed park systems and recreation facilities as part of an effort to improve the everyday life of their citizens, especially those with few other options to find recreation and repose. In Detroit, such an outlook led to creation of Belle Isle and other major green spaces that became national landmarks and still anchor the city's park system.

A hundred years later, as in other cities, Detroit's park and recreation system has suffered from the stresses and wear and tear of time and from the city's diminishing resources available to deal with all its many problems. It is now time to change all that.

Offering citizens safe, attractive, and convenient park and recreation opportunities can no longer be a second tier priority. Other cities have learned that providing high-quality green space and recreation amenities is a vital support for other efforts to keep population and attract new blood and reinvestment to older urban areas.

How well this is done conveys much about a city:

- Properly maintained and operated parks and recreation facilities tell residents, especially those with children, that they do not have to leave the

city for the suburbs for recreation or to simply enjoy being outdoors.

- Not providing good park and recreation facilities and services tells people that, in key ways, the city does not care enough about them to make their lives a little easier and a little more enjoyable.
- Well cared for urban green space is a means of showing existing and prospective residents and business owners that the city is optimistic about its future.

BACKGROUND

The City of Detroit Recreation Department (DRD) is responsible for providing recreation and leisure activities, and related parks and facilities to the nearly 900,000 people living in the city of Detroit – the tenth largest city in the country. This Strategic Master Plan will be the key document whereby DRD can better fulfill its mission to secure greater efficiency in delivering high quality services that target the needs of the community and guide long-term capital development of the city's parks and facilities.

The main focus of this plan is on all of the city-owned parks and recreation centers shown in Figures 1 and 2 on pages 6 and 8.

Trails, greenways, and facilities operated by other agencies, organizations, and businesses are not included and will be covered by other planning efforts.

The origins of the DRD date back to 1806, when the Governor and judges of Michigan laid out Detroit with several public spaces and parks. As Detroit prospered and grew, so did its parks system. As hard times increased, the system lost users, resources and attention.

Over the years, the DRD's scope and quality of service has been significantly impacted by population swells and contractions. Peaking in 1950 at some 1.8 million, population declined to 950,000 over the next 50 years.

Today the city is still losing population, but at a much slower rate of decline. Nevertheless, the varied patterns of population change across the city have resulted in some areas being over served and others underserved by accessible recreation facilities.

Other challenges to the DRD's mission include:

- The impacts of urban blight and urban renewal.
- Budgetary cuts.
- More awareness of the needs of traditionally underserved populations.

The existing park and recreation center facilities are not evenly distributed throughout the city. Areas without convenient access will need new or relocated facilities to meet this Plan's accessibility and convenience goals.

A DIFFERENT WAY

Detroit has the underpinnings of a highly successful parks and recreation system to serve its residents. But DRD must do a better job enhancing and sustaining this system.

The DRD has in recent years been the target of criticism for its perceived failure to provide city residents with high-quality, accessible recreational opportunities. This Strategic Master Plan is the starting point for bringing doubts to an end by demonstrating DRD's determination to do a better job.

Recent attempts to deal with park problems have been made on a case-by-case basis with limited resources. This approach has been a stopgap strategy that leads to perpetual crisis management. This too will change.

This Strategic Master Plan charts a different path to the future. It does so by presenting a clear picture of today's problems and a more forward looking, long term approach to integrate and streamline DRD's core functions. The resulting actions will:

- Secure high-quality facilities and services.
- Meet the needs of all segments of the community.
- Guide long-term capital development to renew and add to the city's recreation facilities.

DRD Mission Statement

The mission of the Detroit Recreation Department is to illustrate leadership and excellence in administration of parks and leisure facilities that promote the health, well-being and quality of life of the citizens of Detroit.

MASTER PLAN ORGANIZATION

In February 2005, the DRD initiated this long-term Strategic Master Plan project. The Plan is organized according to four primary planning questions:

What Do We Have?

What Do We Want?

What Do We Need?

How Do We Get There?

Considered sequentially, the answer to each question informed the next, building a solid foundation of public support and logical basis for plan implementation.

What do we have? Developing a planning strategy for the future started with a full investigation of the existing characteristics of city parks and recreation centers and relating these existing resources to the expected changes in future land use, city population, and other shifts in how and where people will live and work.

What do we want? The success of a park and recreation plan and program is measured by the degree to which it satisfies the recreation demands of city residents. As the Plan was being developed, the public was frequently asked to cite which park and recreation facilities, programs and attributes were important to them.

What do we need? Comparing the type, location, and capacity of existing resources to the types of services and

recreation opportunities identified by the public established how park system resources were or were not likely to fulfill the public's expectations regarding facility improvements, accessibility, and maintenance. The gaps between the "wants" and the "haves" identify what new or expanded facilities will need to be planned and funded over the next 20 years.

How do we get there? Answering this "how" question required the creation of an action plan with recommendations for the future park and recreation center system along with phased capital improvements, system management, and financing.



Table 1 - Properties and Facilities

Cluster	Parks	Recreation Centers	Other Uses	Total Properties
1	43	4	2	49
2	18	1	0	19
3	38	6	6	52
4	62	4	8	74
5	36	7	4	47
6	28	2	5	35
7	25	1	5	31
8	26	1	8	35
9	16	1	2	19
10	16	3	6	25
Total	308	30	46	384

WHAT DO WE HAVE?

The DRD owns a total of 384 properties, of which 338 are currently developed. The remaining 46 properties are not developed for recreation use and include facilities such as greenbelts, parkways, boulevards, cemeteries, and recreation center support buildings. The number of properties and facilities by cluster is shown in Table 1.

The Detroit system is divided into two basic types of facilities - “parks” and “recreation centers”. Each has its own purposes and planning needs.

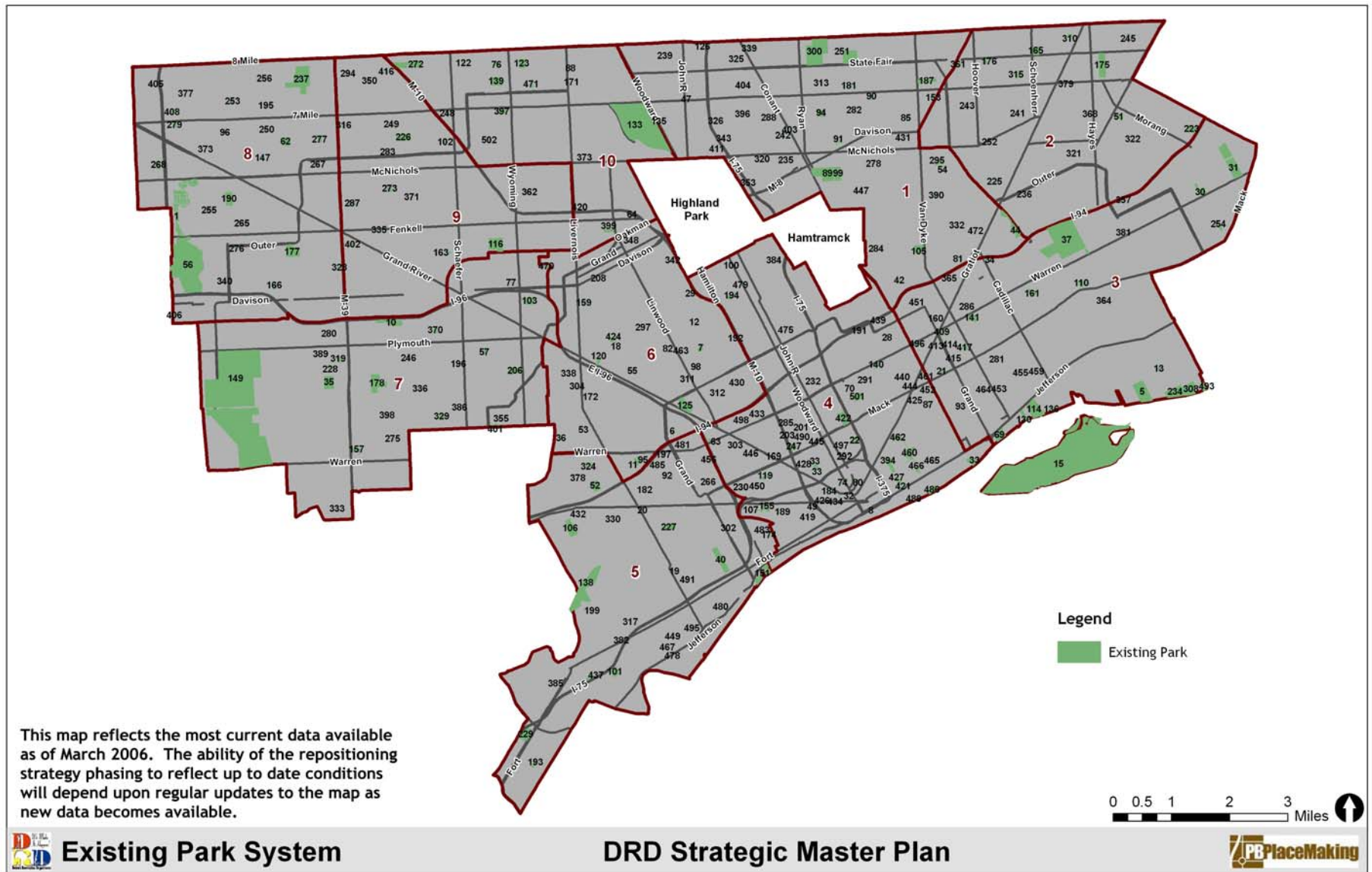
Parks

Parks include green spaces such as playgrounds and tot lots, sports fields, and passive recreation sites. For this planning effort, parks include properties, which are developed to support active forms of recreation such as basketball, tennis, and picnicking. They do not include natural areas and greenways. The park properties range in size from less than ½ acre to over 1,100 acres totaling 4,763 acres. The park area per 1,000 residents is 5.6 acres. A park inventory and condition and capacity report conducted in 2005 shows that the parks system is generally in need of repair and upgrading. Furthermore, the distribution of parks and park acreage is not always consistent with that of the residential population, resulting in minimal recreation opportunities in several areas of the city.

Table 2 - Major Parks

Park	Condition	Capacity
Regional		
Belle Isle Park	Fair	Under
Rouge Park	Fair	Under
Eliza Howell Park	Fair	Near
Palmer Park	Poor	Under
Chandler Park	Fair	Under
Community		
Farwell Playfield	Poor	Under
Dorais Playfield	Fair	Under
Jayne Playfield	Fair	Under
Heilmann Playfield	Poor	Under
Conner Playfield	Poor	Under
Balduck Park	Fair	Under
Riverfront-Lakewood Park	Poor	Under
Alfred Brush Ford Park	Poor	Under
Maheras Playfield	Good	Under
Henderson Park	Fair	Under
Gabriel Richard Park	Fair	Under
Clark Park	Fair	Over
Kemeny Playfield	Fair	Near
Patton Park	Fair	Over
Romanowski Park	Fair	Under
Bishop Playfield	Good	Under
Stoepel No. 1 Park	Fair	Under
Stoepel No. 2 Park	Fair	Under
Stein Playfield	Fair	Under
O’Hair Park	Fair	Under
Butzel Playfield	Fair	Under
Comstock Playfield	Good	Under

Figure 1



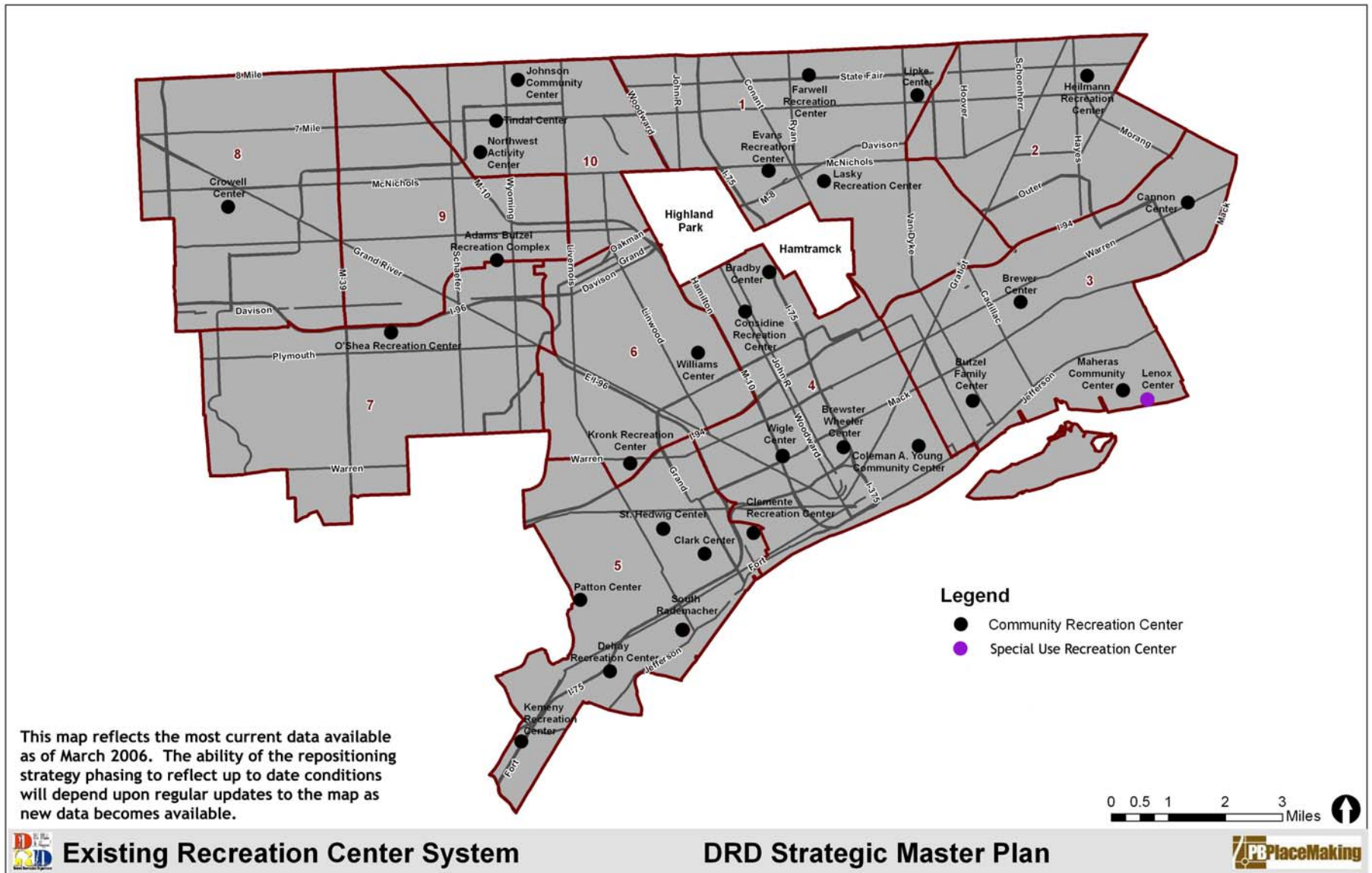
Recreation Centers

Recreation centers provide indoor recreation opportunities such opportunities as swimming, fitness training, and community events. The DRD's 30 recreation centers are distributed throughout the city. An inventory of the recreation centers and an evaluation of their condition revealed that the majority of the 30 recreation centers were in fair or poor condition and under capacity, meaning they did not have sufficient facilities to provide recreation opportunities desires by the public (Table 3). In January 2006, DRD was forced to close nine recreation centers because there was insufficient funding to properly operate and maintain them.

Table 3 – Recreation Centers

Recreation Center	Condition	Capacity	Closed Jan. '06
Evans	Fair	Under	√
Lasky	Fair	Under	
Lipke	Good	Near	
Farwell	Good	Under	
Heilmann	Under Const.	At	
Brewer	Poor	Near	
Butzel	Good	Under	
Cannon	Poor	Under	
Lenox	Good	Under	
Maheras	Fair	Under	√
Bradby	Poor	Under	√
Considine	Poor	Near	
Brewster Wheeler	Poor	Near	
Wigle	Fair	Under	√
Coleman Young	Fair	Near	
Clark	Fair	Under	
Clemente	Good	Under	
Delray	Under Const.		
Kemeny	Poor	Near	
Kronk	Poor	Near	√
Patton	Under Const.	At	
South Rademacher	Good	Under	√
St. Hedwig	Poor	Under	√
Williams	Fair	Near	
O'Shea	Poor	Under	√
Crowell	Poor	Under	
Adams Butzel	Good	Near	
Johnson	Poor	Near	√
Northwest	Poor	At	
Tindal	Fair	Under	

Figure 2



WHAT DO WE WANT?

Guiding Principles and Goals

The Plan incorporates three key principles and a set of nine goals to guide the specifics of DRD's parks and recreation planning and programming. Largely derived from the public process comments, these principles and goals address three main concerns of the Plan:

- The range and quality of park and recreation facilities.
- Making these facilities more accessible to all Detroit residents.
- Proper maintenance and operation of parks and recreation centers.

Principle 1: Facilities

The basic existing facilities and programs are appropriate: focus primarily on improving them. Pay particular attention to the needs of youth and elderly.

- **Goal 1.** Establish a classification system that provides consistent and sustainable improvement standards for each type of facility.
- **Goal 2.** Maintain the current rate of 5.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.
- **Goal 3.** Provide locally-oriented recreation centers at a ratio of one per 45,000 to 50,000 residents along with two city-wide recreation centers.

- **Goal 4.** Provide parks and recreation centers of similar quality throughout the city.

Principle 2: Convenient Access

Locate parks and recreation centers so residents of all ages can use them on a regular basis.

- **Goal 5.** Ensure proper distribution of park land throughout the city.
- **Goal 6.** Equitably distribute recreation centers to serve all city neighborhoods.

Principle 3: Improvement and Maintenance

The system should be one that the city can successfully improve, maintain, and operate.

- **Goal 7.** Improve service levels by:
 1. Increasing the average facility size for more efficient operation, maintenance, and programming;
 2. Enhancing the quality of facilities; and
 3. Decreasing the overall number of park and recreation center sites.
- **Goal 8.** Make local facilities the priority.
- **Goal 9.** Establish a long-term plan to phase and finance system improvements and improve their operation, maintenance, and programming.

WHAT DO WE NEED?

Park and Recreation Center Classification System

The Plan uses a park and recreation center hierarchy to make more informed policy choices. To help frame such decisions, this hierarchy assigns to each facility a clear role in providing for the priority “wants” of city residents. The various types of facilities needed to meet these wants were then compared to the condition and capacity of the existing park and recreation center system. Identifying how and where facilities are not adequately provided helps to define the unmet needs this Strategic Master Plan will correct.

Parks

There are two basic types of city parks.

Local parks generally provide daily recreation opportunities for the neighborhoods in the immediate areas surrounding them. Activities such as walking, children’s play activities, basketball, and softball are examples of active recreation activities in parks that serve nearby residents. Because of this function, these

parks are relatively small, numerous, and distributed throughout the city.

City-wide parks tend to support a wider range of specialty recreation activities, such as swimming and facilities for organized sports. These parks are larger and fewer in number. Unlike local parks, they will not always be a short walk away, but they should be easily accessible from all points in the city.

The number of residents to be served and the number and type of improvements (walking paths, play equipment, playfields, etc.) that a park can provide them varies with size. To make a suitable range of recreation opportunities available, several park types or classifications were developed to facilitate a more systematic approach for providing them. The service areas for any specific park should match the capacity of the park to adequately serve these potential users. For local parks, their number and distribution should result in easy walking distances of the residences they are intended to serve.

Table 4 shows variations on local and city-wide parks.

Table 4 – Park Classifications and Descriptions

Facility Type	Mission Statement / Definition	Size	Service Area
Local Parks			
Mini-Park	Addresses limited, isolated, or specialized recreational needs at small sites in heavily developed areas and at sites with unique recreational opportunities.	0.5 to 2 acres	¼ mile
Neighborhood Park	Serves as the recreational focus of the neighborhood, offers a balance of active and passive recreation activities to neighborhood residents, and provides facilities within walking distance of their homes.	5 to 10 acres	½ mile
Community Park	Provides for active and passive recreational needs of several neighborhoods on a 30 to 50 acre site that is easily accessible by automobile or public transit. This category allows for group activities and other recreational opportunities not feasible at the neighborhood park level.	30 to 50 acres	3 miles
City-wide Parks			
Regional Park	Provides for active and passive recreational needs of the entire community by preserving large open spaces, usually greater than 250 acres that can accommodate recreational activities not feasible within smaller park classifications and are easily accessible by automobile or public transit.	> 250 acres	City-wide
Plaza Park	Public spaces set aside for civic purposes and commercial activities. They are usually located at the intersection of important streets or other significant locations. The landscape is mostly hard-surface and may have trees or other plantings.	< 2 acres	½ mile or community-wide
Sports Park	Consolidates heavily programmed athletic facilities and associated fields at larger and fewer sites strategically located throughout the community.	> 50 acres	City-wide

Recreation Centers

Recreation centers also have a hierarchy though it is somewhat simpler than for parks. There are not as many recreation center types, and only one type of locally-oriented recreation center is necessary. The classifications for recreation centers are shown in Table 5.

Most recreation facilities are located and designed to accommodate local neighborhood needs but some are planned to meet more specialized city-wide needs. Although pedestrian access is important, the recreation centers must serve a greater number of residents than local parks. Therefore, the service areas are larger than convenient walking distance and should, ideally, be served by transit.

Not all park and recreation center types can, or should, try to serve all age groups equally. Nevertheless, applying the Plan recommendations will see that each park and recreation centers will contain the right mix of improvements designed to accommodate all the groups in their particular service area.

Table 5 - Recreation Center Classifications and Descriptions

Facility Type	Mission Statement / Definition	Size	Service Area
Local Centers			
Community Recreation Center	The most common type of recreational facility in the city. It should provide a medium range of facilities for recreational and educational purposes, targeted towards the specific requirements of the community it serves. It should have potential to expand as neighborhood needs change.	Minimum 25,000 square feet	1.5-2 miles 45,000 to 50,000 residents
City-wide Centers			
Regional Recreation Center	This is the largest type of recreational facility in the city. It should offer a wide range of recreational, entertainment, and educational facilities and activities. This should include an even balance of indoor and outdoor activities. The site for this type of center should have adequate acreage to accommodate potential future expansion.	Minimum 80,000 square feet	City-wide 300,000 to 500,000 residents
Special Use Recreation Center	This facility is primarily targeted for recreational use by a specific group in the community and its facilities will therefore be designed to best meet the needs of the group for which the facility is intended. The building will be for recreational use and commonly offer educational facilities.	Minimum 15,000 square feet	City-wide
Recreation Support Facility	Facilities for non-recreational use required for the support of recreational facilities. These may include facilities open to the public, such as comfort stations.	Varies	City-wide

Convenient Access

Convenient access to recreation opportunities is a key need of all city residents. Convenient access is defined as being within $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile for parks and within $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles for community recreation centers. However, the existing park and recreation center facilities are not evenly distributed throughout the city.

An accessibility analysis using these distances shows that, while many areas of the city have convenient access to parks and recreation centers, others do not. These areas of the city will need new or relocated facilities to satisfy this Plan's accessibility and convenience goals. However, any redistribution of facilities will be balanced with the goals to retain or enhance the current levels of recreation opportunities associated with total park land acreage and recreation center capacity.

Improvements and Maintenance

Whatever redistribution and new facilities are created to meet these accessibility and convenience goals, the end result must be a system that DRD can successfully maintain and operate.

The extensive maintenance and improvement needs of the city's parks and recreation centers are recognized by all. Furthermore, the city owns a significant number of properties and facilities that are either too small or poorly located to provide the adequate levels of service described

in this Plan. These obsolete and inefficient aspects of the current system place a considerable strain on the DRD budget, a fiscally unsustainable situation that this Strategic Master Plan must correct if it is to succeed.

Creating a more efficient and sustainable system will require:

- Reducing the number of parks;
- Retaining, but not expanding, the total park acreage;
- Decreasing the number of community recreation centers, but retaining or enhancing the total capacity of these centers to serve the public; and
- Recommending replacement of facilities in the worst physical condition or that are in areas with duplicated facilities.

In addition to more efficient location of different types of facilities, the future operations and maintenance program for such facilities must also become more efficient. This can be done through a strategy that treats the DRD system from three different, but interrelated perspectives:

- *System-wide operation policy* that looks at overall DRD operations in such areas as purchasing and administrative services, planning and design, water conservation, transportation, food service, and new construction.
- *Facility classification and prototype considerations* for long-term financing and maintenance are addressed as part of the planning and design, which precedes construction. This approach leads to parks and recreation centers that are more economically sustainable.
- *Site specific maintenance programs*, which are appropriate to the facility classification and the specific needs dictated by the improvements present and level of use.

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Perhaps the most important part of any master plan is charting the way to get it done.

All the recommendations of this Plan are good ideas, but good ideas just don't happen. And trying to make them happen as chances occur or whenever a crisis threatens to boil over is no longer acceptable.

This Strategic Master Plan Master Plan corrects that by including an action plan of five elements to ensure success:

- Developing a *Repositioning Strategy* to identify which parks and recreation centers should be retained or shifted.
- Setting a *Capital Improvements Priorities* to define an appropriate phasing plan.
- Establishing an efficient *Operations and Maintenance Program* for a proactive and consistent method to sustaining recreation programs and facilities.
- Securing *Funding* to support plan implementation.
- Following a process for *Ensuring Success*.

REPOSITIONING STRATEGY

The Master Plan Repositioning Strategy will address the following issues to ensure the future park and recreation system will maximize efficient provision of recreation opportunities:

- Location
- Condition of Facilities
- Facility Lifespan
- Capacity of Facilities

Location

The repositioning strategy will determine the appropriate location of new facilities to fill service area gaps regarding good accessibility and convenience for all city residents. The repositioning strategy also requires identifying those facilities that should be repositioned because of their duplication of services or their poor condition or inadequate capacity.

Because population increases are not forecast city-wide, the repositioning strategy can maintain overall current capacity levels and should not increase the overall number of facilities. But within this overall limit, the repositioning strategy will need to reallocate resources and it must stabilize operations and maintenance costs. To meet the

goals for convenient access city-wide, some of the existing facilities need to be relocated.

Condition of Existing Facilities

The condition of existing parks and recreation centers is an important component of the repositioning strategy. To maximize use of existing recreation facility investments and to minimize future maintenance costs, facilities in poor condition relative to others serving the same neighborhoods should be considered for repositioning to new locations. Facilities in relatively good condition should generally be retained and/or improved.

Facility Lifespan

Related to the condition is the expected lifespan of the facility. All buildings and park improvements will have periods over which they will remain sound and sustainable before needing to be replaced. The facility lifespan relates primarily to the core components, such as structural elements and plumbing.

Capacity of Existing Facilities

The capacity of many existing parks and recreation centers as identified in the condition and capacity reports in Appendices B and C are under capacity because they are either too small or lack a full complement of desired facilities (e.g., play equipment, swimming pools).

To maximize use of existing recreation facility investments and to minimize future maintenance costs, facilities that are under capacity relative to others serving the same neighborhoods should be considered for repositioning to new locations. This is especially true if the site is too small to ever accommodate the park or recreation center standards called for in this Plan. Facilities that are near, at, or over capacity should generally be retained and/or improved.

Parks

The Condition and Capacity Report for Parks (Appendix B) provides a detailed evaluation of each park site in the city. Approximately one-half of the parks are in fair condition (153), 124 are in poor condition, and 33 are in good condition. In addition, the majority are under capacity, meaning they do not have sufficient improvements for their park classification and recreation function (e.g., neighborhood park, community park, etc.).

Recreation Centers

The Condition and Capacity Report for Recreation Centers (Appendix C) provides a detailed evaluation of each of the 30 recreation centers in the city. Due to poor condition and operations issues, nine of these centers were closed in January 2006, leaving 21 centers still open in good (9), fair (5), and poor (7) condition.

Future Park and Recreation Center System

What then is the result of successful implementation of the Strategic Master Plan? It will be a revamped, more accessible and more sustainable park and recreation system.

The future park system will feature:

- 220 parks, including five regional parks.
- 27 parks in new strategic locations.
- Repositioning of 113 sites, most of which are undersized and in poor condition.

Figure 3 shows how the repositioning strategy will provide improved service area coverage for all city residents.

The future recreation center system will include:

- Repositioning of eight currently operating recreation centers.
- 14 community recreation centers, including two in new locations.
- Two regional recreation centers, both in new locations.
- One special use recreation center.

The future recreation center system is shown in Figure 4, which also shows how the repositioning strategy will provide improved service area coverage for all city residents.

This future system is consistent with the three guiding principles and the nine goals because:

- The parks and recreation centers will be maintained, renovated, or built to better support the recreation activities city residents want while retaining existing levels of service.
- The park and recreation center sites will be redistributed to provide more convenient and equitable access for all residents across the city.
- A parks and recreation system with fewer but better sites and facilities will be more efficient to maintain and operate.

Figure 3

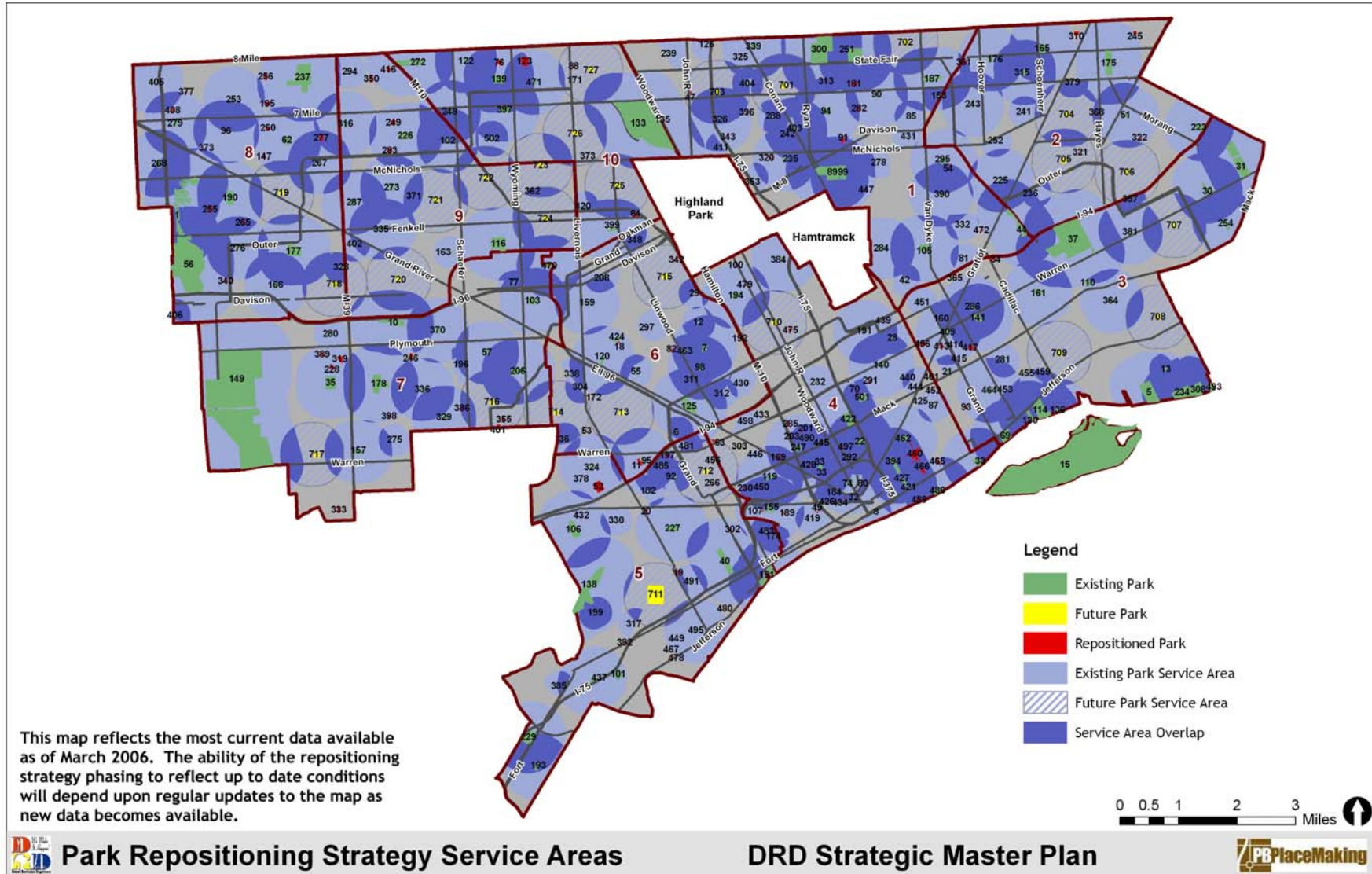
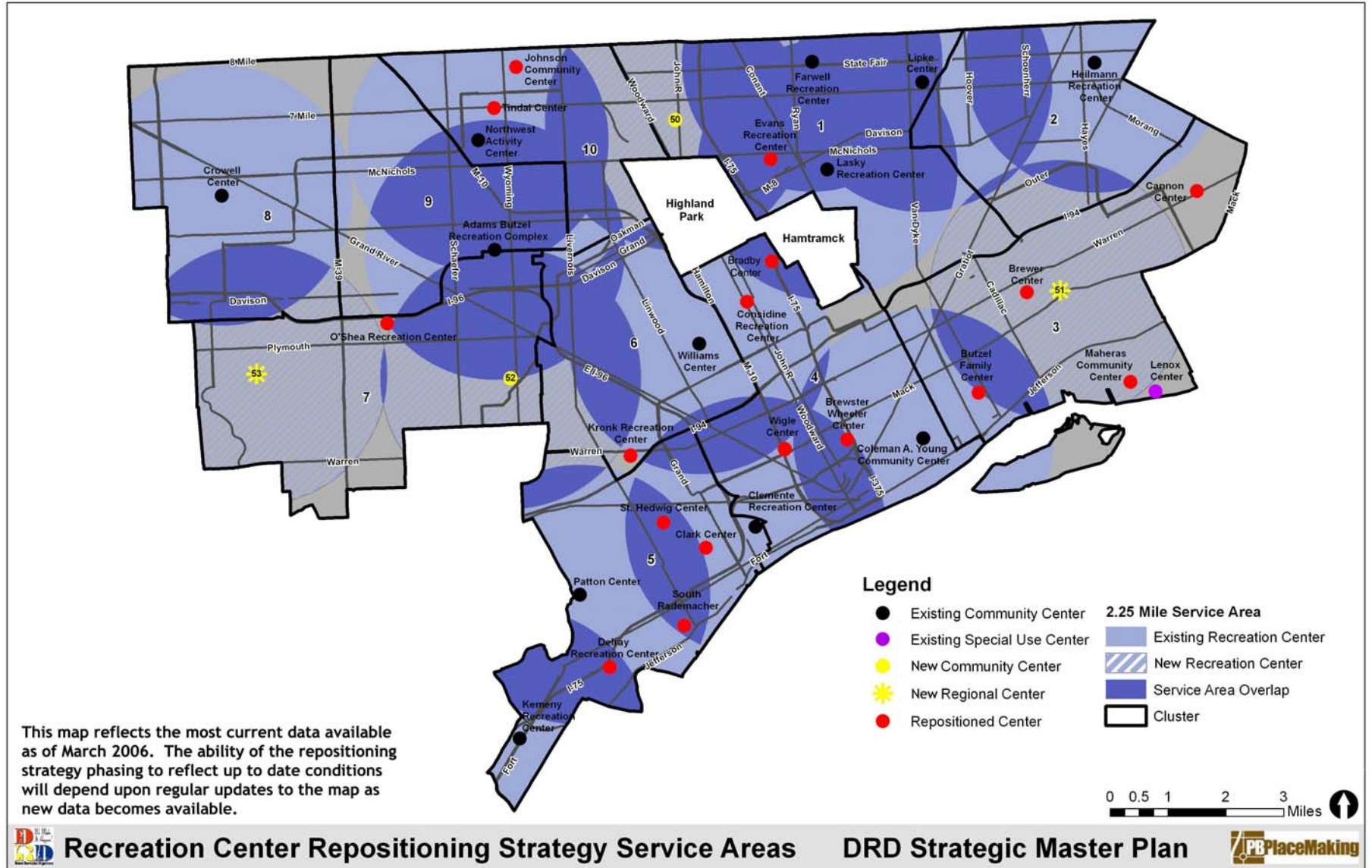


Figure 4



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

The improvement and reconfiguration of the park and recreation center system through the Repositioning Strategy will require substantial investment over an extended period of time. The Capital Improvement Priorities will provide a rational and consistent decision-making framework to guide the investment priorities that will ultimately result in the desired park and recreation center system. Priorities will adhere to the requirements that recreation opportunities should be delivered equitably as facilities are repositioned and residents should not experience a reduction in levels of service (e.g., park acreage and facilities). Also, the neighborhoods with the greatest need and potential for private investment should generally be given higher priority. Consequently, the Capital Improvement Prioritization Strategy will need to sequence any closure of a facility with a corresponding improvement that would serve the same neighborhood. For example, a mini park may be closed at the same time another park in the same service area is improved or enlarged.

To help identify phasing priorities, several neighborhood characteristics were evaluated:

- **Population density.** Areas with higher population densities generally have greater needs for recreation facilities due to the number of residents and less private open space than lower density areas.

- **Population change.** Some areas of the city are gaining population, others are remaining steady, and several are declining. Park and recreation needs will tend to be higher in areas with increasing numbers of residents.
- **Economic activity.** Often, economic activity and residential population go hand in hand. Investment in property renovation and new construction is an indication of neighborhood vitality and a sign that city investment in local recreation facilities will foster additional investment in the community.
- **Aggregate housing value trends.** Related to the economic activity factor, the degree of property value appreciation value is another indicator of neighborhood reinvestment and stability.
- **Service area coverage.** Recreation facilities are intended to serve city residents, and therefore, non-residential areas do not need to be served by new or existing facilities.

These neighborhood characteristics were analyzed to determine the areas of the city that would be the most attractive for park and recreation center improvements. This analysis is presented in the Appendix of the main report. It is these stronger areas that should generally be higher priorities for system improvements and facility repositioning.

For the Plan to ultimately succeed, the DRD must:

Follow the Repositioning Strategy;

Set and Adjust the Capital Improvement Priorities;

Establish an Efficient and Sustainable Operations and Maintenance Program;

Develop a Funding Strategy; and

Monitor and Update.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

The comment solicitation process made clear that an operations and maintenance program for parks and recreation centers is a key public concern.

The operations and maintenance program must look to the future in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner. This approach is manifested at three levels:

- *System level* by looking at ways to implement management practices that are more environmentally and economically sustainable.
- *Prototype level* by developing a uniform method for operating and maintaining the different types of recreation facilities.
- *Site level* by responding to specific needs that will vary on a site-by-site basis.

FUNDING

Funding Challenges

A significant challenge for the DRD will be its ability to secure funding from multiple sources; while responding with effective management of parks and recreation centers and programs. Significant financial investment is critical for physical development, land acquisition and for improving and maintaining on-going resources for park and recreation center use. Funding needs also include programming, operational maintenance, and public safety assistance.

Funding Mechanisms

Several potential funding mechanisms are available, not all of which will be appropriate or viable for any given situation.

- Public – Local
- Public – Non-Local
- Private – Non-User
- Private – Beneficiary

Proceeds from repositioned property sale must be made available to DRD to purchase repositioned sites and support facility improvements, renovation, and new construction.

ENSURING SUCCESS

The Strategic Master Plan is not self-implementing, and the city will need to make a concerted effort to make the envisioned park and recreation center system a reality.

For the Plan to ultimately succeed, the DRD must:

- Follow the Repositioning Strategy;
- Set and Adjust the Capital Improvement Priorities;
- Establish an Efficient and Sustainable Operations and Maintenance Program;
- Develop a Funding Strategy; and
- Monitor and Update.

Follow the Repositioning Strategy

The Repositioning Strategy is based upon the Guiding Principles and Goals, and like them, should only be amended as part of a major plan amendment. The Repositioning Strategy identifies what the future park and recreation center system should ultimately become.

Set and Adjust the Capital Improvement Priorities

Each year, DRD and the city develop a budget for capital improvements. The Repositioning Strategy identifies the future system improvements to be made, and the Capital Improvements Priorities provide a detailed phasing plan to accomplish it (Appendix A). The Capital Improvements Priorities are scheduled in 5-year increments for 20 years. The rationale for the timing of improvements contemplated in the Repositioning Strategy is explained earlier in this chapter.

The Capital Improvement Priorities provide a detailed phasing recommendation for the first five years followed by more generalized timing for the next 15 years of the 20-year planning horizon. Although the Capital Improvement Priorities are specific, they should not be viewed as a rigid and inflexible. The Repositioning Strategy sets out firm, policy-based objectives, but the Capital Improvement Priorities to create the future system may be adjusted to respond to factors such as available funding, operations and maintenance capabilities, and unforeseen opportunities. Adjustments to the priorities should be made using Strategic Master Plan guidelines.

Establish an Efficient and Sustainable Operations and Maintenance Program

Operations and maintenance of parks and recreation centers will be successful by:

- Reforming the current operations and maintenance program, as described above, to be more efficient and responsive to available funding; and
- Creating a park and recreation center system identified in the Repositioning Strategy that is more efficient to operate and maintain.

The reform of current practices should be implemented immediately, and the operations and maintenance inefficiencies related to the current system will ease over time as planned capital improvements are made.

Develop a Funding Strategy

As with all cities, funding is typically a major hurdle for providing park and recreation center improvements. Using the information above as a starting point, the city should focus on:

- Developing a funding strategy that utilizes a wide range of funding sources;
- Establishing a full-time staff responsibility to pursue and obtain funding from the identified sources; and

Implementing the Repositioning Strategy is of primary importance, and it is appropriate to shift project priorities based on changing circumstances.

- Allowing DRD to retain proceeds from property sales for purchasing land for new/expanded sites and facilities improvements as identified in the Repositioning Strategy.

Monitor and Update

The Guiding Principles and Goals and the Repositioning Strategy represent adopted policy direction, which should only be amended as part of a major plan amendment if and when it is deemed appropriate. Although these foundational elements of the plan should remain relatively stable, the remaining Plan elements - Capital Improvement Priorities, Operations and Maintenance, and Funding - should be monitored and adjusted to respond to progress made and changing circumstances.

Capital Improvement Priorities

The initial Capital Improvement Priorities are described in Appendix A. They provide a phasing sequence to implement the Repositioning Strategy over the next 20 years. These priorities should be re-evaluated annually and adjusted as necessary to respond to projects completed from the previous year, available funding for the upcoming year(s), and opportunities (e.g., funding grant) that affect project phasing. Adjustments to phasing should be made according to the framework and evaluation factors described in Volume II of the Strategic Master Plan.

The Condition and Capacity Reports for parks and recreations centers were developed as a tool for the city to maintain detailed information about all of its facilities. The

format allows easy updates, but the DRD staff will need to institute a process that ensures Condition and Capacity Report updates following the completion of any capital improvement or major repair project at any of the parks and recreation centers.

Operations and Maintenance

Operations and maintenance should be based upon the modes described above. If funding reductions necessitate a corresponding decline in maintenance levels, the adjustments should be made using specific maintenance mode levels so the impacts of reductions are understood and they will be implemented uniformly throughout the system. In addition, operations and maintenance issues should be fully considered during the design and construction phases of all new facility improvements to minimize future maintenance costs.

Funding

Having an adopted DRD Strategic Master Plan will greatly enhance the city's ability to obtain funding to support improvement of the park and recreation center system. The city should use the Plan to leverage funding from a wide variety of potential sources. Because funding levels will have a direct impact upon the Capital Improvement Priorities and Operations and Maintenance, available funding should be annually factored into the implementation of these two Plan elements.

CONCLUSION

It will take more than a revamped DRD armed with a set of good ideas to make this Strategic Master Plan happen. This Strategic Master Plan needs to be coordinated with other efforts to rebuild and renew Detroit - new housing, better schools, safer streets and a reinvigorated economy. There is much to learn from other cities. But ultimately it will be all of us here in Detroit – citizens, business owners, developers, officials and agency staff -- who must decide that “City Parks Matter” and act upon such convictions.

We Make It Happen!



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